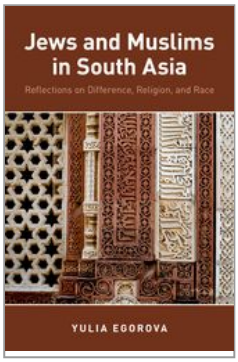

Jews and Muslims in South Asia: Reflections on Difference, Religion, and Race
Yulia Egorova

Print publication date: 2018
Print ISBN-13: 9780199856237
Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: October 2018
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780199856237.001.0001

Introduction

Yulia Egorova

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780199856237.003.0001

Abstract and Keywords

The chapter outlines the research questions to be explored in the book and reflects on the main bodies of academic literature that the discussion subsequently draws on. It suggests that the book uses the South Asian context to pursue two separate but co-dependent strands of analysis, as it both focuses on the conceptual relationship between notions of Jewishness and meanings assigned to being Muslim on the subcontinent, and explores the diverse incarnations of interactions that could be broadly described under the rubric of Jewish-Muslim relations, putting the growing literature on this topic in dialogue with academic interventions interrogating anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and their overlapping histories.

Keywords: Jews, Muslims, South Asia, race, religion, minorities, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia

The Beit Shalom synagogue in Mumbai is located in a Muslim neighbourhood. I visited it a few days before the High Holidays, knocked on the gates, and was greeted by a security guard.[1] I explained that I was there for a visit. The guard showed me into an office, where Mr. Penkar,[2] a member of the synagogue's Bene Israel congregation, asked me if there was anything in particular that I wanted to see. I said I was collecting material for a book on Jewish-Muslim relations in South Asia and asked if he would share his thoughts on the subject.

Mr. Penkar said that there had never been any problems in the synagogue, which, like several other synagogues in the city, was in an area mainly populated by Muslims. Back in the 1950s the neighbourhood was home to a significant number of Jewish families who lived in close proximity to the synagogue, but

after they made *aliyah*[3] to the State of Israel, their place was taken by Muslims. "It is High Holidays time and synagogue security is very tight," said Mr. Penkar. "Mumbai police are working closely with us. We tell them how many people we are expecting to attend each festival and how long each ceremony will last. However, we have never had any problems with local Muslims, **(p.2)** and there should not be any problems between us, because Judaism and Islam are so close. All the problems between Jews and Muslims are problems about land and not about religion. Some people are extremely ignorant, they don't know anything about Judaism, and say Jews are bad guys because of Israel. But local Muslims have never had any problems with us and the fact that there is a synagogue here. They know what it is, and it does not bother them."

I asked if the Jewish community was comfortable in contemporary India. Mr. Penkar said that they were doing well under the BJP government.[4] "The Jews are fine these days, because the Modi government is pro-Israel. Modi is on a mission to reconvert all Muslims back to Hinduism. I don't know how possible it is, but this is what the BJP want and that's why they are so friendly with Israel. But if you are Jewish, you are ok … for the time being … ," he said.

The hesitation about the future of Indian Jews revealed in Mr. Penkar's words echoes a scene from *The Man with Enormous Wings* (2010), a novel by the renowned Bene Israel Indian Jewish writer Esther David, in which she describes her decision to leave her old house in Ahmedabad in the aftermath of the Gujarat riots of 2002. The house was located on the border between the Hindu and the Muslim neighbourhoods of Ahmedabad, an area which saw devastating anti-Muslim violence during the riots. One day a Muslim woman was killed on the road close to the house, an image which continued to haunt David years after the violence subsided: "I am afraid for this novel" she writes, "I am afraid of being threatened for voicing my protest against a majority community. I am a woman and a Jew. I could end up like the corpse on the road" (2010: 51).

This book started with an idea to explore Jewish-Muslim relations in South Asia, focusing on the two communities' mutual perceptions **(p.3)** and the minutiae of their day-to-day interactions. I set out to examine how Jews and Muslims relate to each other in a place where, in contrast to Europe, their perceived mutual attitudes do not often make headlines. Historically, Jews and Muslims have shared a common space reserved in the European imaginary for the ultimate other.[5] At the same time, nowadays, Western political and mass media discourses construct Jews and Muslims in opposition to each other and see their relationship as unavoidably polarized due to the conflict in the Middle East, and this constructed polarization could not but contribute to tensions in the two groups. In my study I therefore wanted to discuss how Jews and Muslims relate to each other in a context that is removed from the European/Christian nexus.

However, very soon it became apparent that, as transpires in the brief ethnographic and literary fragments presented above, in South Asia, this relationship is still intrinsically connected to broader narratives about Jews and Muslims, and my analytical and ethnographic focus expanded to turn to what I would describe as Jewish-Muslim relations in South Asia writ large. As a result, I explore in the book not only the mutual attitudes towards and encounters between local Jews and local Muslims but also the nodal points where wider global discourses about Jews and Muslims intersect, co-constitute, and co-produce each other in South Asia. In doing so, the book interrogates the processual nature of everyday constructions of difference and the way it is informed by the realities of global and local politics, and takes the reader from the history of Jewish-Muslim convergences in South Asia to a discussion of attitudes towards Jews in Pakistan and to the reality of being Jewish or Muslim in India during the Gujarat riots and after the Mumbai attacks.

(p.4) The book uses the South Asian context to pursue two separate but co-dependent strands of analysis—it will both focus on the conceptual relationship between notions of Jewishness and meanings assigned to being Muslim on the subcontinent and explore the diverse incarnations of interactions that could be broadly described under the rubric of Jewish-Muslim relations, putting the growing literature on this topic in dialogue with academic interventions interrogating anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and their overlapping histories.[6]

The book will examine how the difference between Jews and Muslims has been constructed and reconfigured in the modern world in global discourses about Jewishness and Islam by looking at the way this difference is imagined and lived in South Asia and will explore how in varying sociopolitical contexts and circumstances constructions of this difference acquire differing dimensions. My main argument will be two-fold. First, I will propose that South Asia presents yet another site where Jewish and Muslim imageries both overlap and are construed in opposition to each other. The book will do so by discussing how, in contemporary India, South Asian Jewish experiences have been turned into a rhetorical tool to negate the discrimination of religious minorities, while, at the same time, the rhetoric of the Hindu right indicates that the genealogies of some of the country's most conspicuous anti-minority discourses and practices go back to European anti-Semitism. Moreover, I will argue that these anti-Muslim sentiments, which found extreme expression in communal violence, are then read back at Jewish persons and spaces in India, as it transpires, for instance, in the quote from *The Man with Enormous* ***(p.5)*** *Wings*. On the broader theoretical plane, I will suggest that the ostensible celebration of Jewishness in the discourse of the Hindu (and, analogously, European) right masks not only anti-Muslim, but also anti-Jewish prejudice, as it builds upon narratives about Jewish constituencies' alleged radical alterity and strongly implies that the acceptance of the Jewish minority is contingent upon it fitting into specific and non-negotiable blueprints of behaviour and modes of self-representation that

collapse their perceived difference into the mainstream Hindu (or European) self. These discourses, which aim at the production of sameness, construct both Jews and Muslims as the other that needs to be assimilated into the normativity of the imagined majority but, at the same time, differentiate between the two, creating a hierarchy of alterities where the degree of integration within the perceived “host” society becomes a measure of success or failure.

My second area of theoretical attention interrogates South Asian Jewish and Muslim histories, imageries, and lived experiences as a domain where the two communities encounter each other and interact in diverse ways that do not easily fit preconceived Western understandings of what the relations between Jews and Muslims as two bounded categories are supposed to encompass. As my conversation with Mr. Penkar immediately reveals, Jewish-Muslim relations seen as a set of interactions between Jews and Muslims in each locale challenge and disrupt Jewish-Muslim relations as a trope evoking in one’s mind the Israel-Palestine conflict and concerns about synagogue security. The book will discuss how interactions between Jewish and Muslim spaces, organizations, and individuals can take multiple forms which may or may not fall under the rubric of what some public and academic discourses would have described as Jewish-Muslim relations and that these interactions are highly diverse and dependent on a wide range of contexts of global, national, and local significance. These contexts in their turn intersect with and inform each other. I **(p.6)** will therefore argue that popular narratives about perceived Jewish-Muslim antagonism (or similarity) are often a product of the same European discourses that have historically constructed both Jews and Muslims as the other.

In developing the two sets of arguments, I will engage another topic of broader theoretical concern exploring how notions of racial and religious difference constructed in the colonial and earlier Christian discourse continue to produce imageries of race and religion that are interrelated with each other to the effect that the boundaries between the two notions become ever more permeable. Following British ethnographers and administrators inscribing Indian Jews and Muslims as religiously different from, but, at the same time, racially similar to the constructed Hindu majority, the two communities later became subjected to specific forms of stigmatization and oppression. In the case of Indian Muslims, these constructions, which emanated from the colonial discourse configuring all inhabitants of the subcontinent as racially different from Europeans and, to varying degrees, as similar to each other, resulted in their subsequent subjection to reconversion campaigns by the Hindu right. In the case of Indian Jews, colonial racialization had led to competitive intragroup divisions and failure to be recognized as Jewish by Western Jewish constituencies and, subsequently, by Israeli religious authorities. Both cases illuminate the way racialist constructions continue to interpellate varying understandings of religious boundaries, and, as

the book will argue, shaped both the way Jews and Muslims are treated and perceived in India and the way they relate to each other.

The specifics of each of these arguments will be further signposted throughout this chapter, but first, let us outline the main problematics and bodies of academic literature that the book will engage with.

(p.7) Jews, Muslims, Difference

South Asian Muslims account for the most numerous Muslim community in the world and demonstrate a wide range of cultural, regional, and linguistic specificities, as well as of denominational and political affiliations. Indian Jews are often described as both one of the smallest religious groups in South Asia and one of the smallest Jewish congregations in the world. Nevertheless, their community numbers several distinct groups, each varied in its own right. As I will discuss throughout the book, despite this diversity and regional distinctiveness of the subcontinent, the history of South Asian Jews and Muslims in the colonial and postcolonial periods reveals some of the same patterns of minoritization and othering that Jews and Muslims were subjected to in Europe.

As I will attempt to show in chapter 3, in later British period and independent India, their imageries would also begin to intersect in the nationalist conceptualizations of minority-majority relations, and particularly in the rhetoric of the Hindu right, in ways close to those evident in European public and political discourses that were contemporary to them. In exploring the relationship between constructions of Jews and Muslims in the South Asian context I will therefore engage with academic interventions that have discussed the connection between Jewish and Muslim colonial and postcolonial experiences more broadly, as well as those which focused specifically on the Jewish/Muslim nexus.

Edward Said had famously described Orientalism as the “Islamic branch” of anti-Semitism (1979: 28), and suggested that “hostility to Islam in the modern Christian West has historically gone hand in hand with, has stemmed from the same source, has been nourished in the same stream as anti-Semitism, and that a critique of the orthodoxies, dogmas, and disciplinary procedures of orientalism contribute to an enlargement of our understanding of the cultural mechanisms of anti-Semitism” (1985: 99).

(p.8) More recently, Gil Anidjar (2003) has shown how in Europe the figure of the enemy is contingent on the way Europeans had related to both Jews and Arabs, who in contemporary Western imaginary became associated with Muslims, and argued that it is these attitudes that had set up in motion processes which had resulted in current conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Anidjar warns us against considering the figures of the Jew and the Arab independently of each other, as categories that would have “thoroughly and hermetically distinct histories.” The question that Anidjar raises

is, “What is Europe such that it has managed to distinguish itself from both Jew and Arab and to render its role in the distinction, the separation, and the enmity of Jew and Arab invisible—invisible, perhaps most of all to itself?” (2003: xviii).

Important attempts to explore the relationship between Jewish and Muslim imageries in the context of contemporary Europe have been made in the past decade by scholars who focused on the diasporic conditions of contemporary Muslims. These contributions come from a wide range of disciplines and have involved drawing parallels between the historical experiences of the Jewish people and the current experiences of Muslims in Europe. For instance, historian Dan Diner has observed that “Muslims today, like Jews in the past, face the task of transforming their all-encompassing religion into a *confessio*, an abstract faith community among other faith communities” (2007: 52). Sociologist Sara Farris (2014) in her essay *From the Jewish Question to the Muslim Question* argues that nowadays in Europe it is the Muslims, rather than the Jews, who are seen as a group allegedly behaving as a separate constituency within Western nations and discriminated against on account of this alleged behaviour.[7] Ruth **(p.9)** Mandel observes in her ethnography of the Turkish community of Germany that the reification of the Turks as irredeemable outsiders which had occurred in the contemporary German public discourse is unsettlingly reminiscent, though not by any means identical, to the place that, as Sander Gilman (1990) has demonstrated, had been reserved for the Jews in the German political imagination since the days of the Reformation (Mandel 2008: 13). Mandel argues that while, on the one hand, Turkish Germans are seen as unassimilated outsiders, on the other hand, those Turks who achieved perceived success in German society are considered to be “hybrids” at best and “traitors” at worst (2008: 131). Finally, philosopher Brian Klug (2014) asks the broader question about whether the analogy between the anti-Semitism of the past and the Islamophobia of the present is analytically valid and concludes that within limits it is worth asserting, because it usefully sheds light on the multiple social and political realities that Europe faces at the moment.[8]

(p.10) This book will argue that the context of South Asia provides a fruitful site for exploring the complexities of the relationship between imageries of Jews and Muslims, as, though it takes us away from the European context, where some of the most potent constructs of Jewishness and Islam originate, it at the same time had a prominent colonial history revealing how far-reaching the conceptual blueprints of alterity originating in Europe have been, and what a strong effect they have had on local understandings of difference worldwide. I will discuss the diverse ways in which European/global discourses about Jews and Muslims have mapped onto the local and national concerns about difference in South Asia, often producing complex genealogies of discrimination, such as, for instance, when Indian Muslims become thematized as a minority in ways that are conceptually similar to those that have been applied to Jews in modern

Europe, or when Indian Jews are subjected to anti-Muslim prejudice on account of their physicality and sartorial practices.

This monograph is probably the first book-length study to explore the Jewish/Muslim nexus in South Asia ethnographically, and in doing so it will offer an anthropological perspective to a growing number of publications coming mainly from the disciplines of history and literary studies that have already in important ways addressed the parallels in the experiences/constructions of European Jews and South Asian Muslims and other minorities.

For instance, Paul Brass (1996), drawing on Robert Weinberg (1996) and Virginia van Dyke (1996), discussed the parallels **(p.11)** between pogroms in imperial Russia and Germany and anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh riots in independent India. Brass points out how in different parts of Russia and in India Jews and Muslims and Sikhs respectively were blamed for the pogroms/riots that were directed against them or for actions allegedly leading to violence in which mostly Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs were the victims, such as for instance, when pogroms in Russia followed political unrest for which the Jews were blamed, when the Sikhs in India in 1984 were accused of having brought the violence upon themselves for not "properly" condemning the assassination of Indira Gandhi, or when the Hindu right argue that the Muslims always start communal riots, attack first, and then get killed by the police rather than the Hindu rioters (Brass 1996: 23–24).[9]

The project that has engaged with the conceptual association between the "Jewish Question" in Europe and the "Muslim Question" in the context of South Asia, and which is therefore particularly germane to our reflections on the relationship between Jewish and South Asian Muslim imageries as a place where global narratives of difference are constructed and realized, is Aamir Mufti's (2007) monograph *Enlightenment in the Colony*. Mufti posits that South Asian Muslims have been subjected to minoritization practices that hark back to the anti-Jewish discriminatory discourses of modern Europe, suggesting that "in the 'question' of the Jews" status in modern culture and society, as it first came to be formulated in the late eighteenth century, what emerges is a set of paradigmatic narratives, conceptual frameworks, motifs, and formal relationships concerned with the very question of minority existence, which are then disseminated globally in the emergence, under colonial and semicolonial **(p.12)** conditions, of the forms of modern social, political, and cultural life" (2007: 2).

Mufti thus reinterprets from the perspective of the South Asian subcontinent's experiences the central role that Jewishness has played in Western culture and offers a "distinctly Third World and postcolonial understanding of those forms of the constitutive failure of the idea of Europe that come to us coded as the 'Jewish Question'" (2007: 4). The author also considers the significance of the Jewish problematics in contemporary English-language South Asian literature to

demonstrate how the discussions of Jewish experience in these novels set a critical background for an exploration of intercommunity relations in the subcontinent.

The latter theme is developed in detail in Anna Guttman's *Writing Indians and Jews: Metaphorics of Jewishness in South Asian Literature*, which suggests that "Jews and Jewishness loom large in the contemporary South Asian cultural imaginary, both on the subcontinent and in the Indian Diaspora" (2013: 1) and throws into relief different notions of Jewishness present in the contemporary South Asian literature. It explores how the trope of "The Wandering Jew" is used by South Asian writers to discuss the way in which South Asian identity is beginning to be understood in global terms, how Holocaust themes are deployed by Indian authors both to reference the Partition and to highlight their own understandings of difference, and how Indian Jewish writers approach the lived experiences of their communities in ways that put discussions of meanings of Jewishness in dialogue with postcolonial studies. In addressing these themes, Guttman often refers specifically to the Muslim context, highlighting how Indian Jewish history is positioned in parts of the Indian public discourse in such a way as to critique Muslims' claims that the Hindu right propagates religious intolerance, an issue that this book will consider in detail in chapter 3.

(p.13) This ambiguity of positions that Indian Jews find themselves in in independent India in the context of collapsing intercommunity relations and rising anti-Muslim rhetoric and practices will be one of the topics that the book will attempt to tackle. I hope to contribute to the discussion of the intersections of Jewish and Muslim imageries in the contemporary world in general and to take it in a new disciplinary direction by exploring this problematics ethnographically, as well as through recourse to literary examples akin to the one with which I started this chapter. On the broader theoretical plane, I will both engage with debates about the relationship between Jewish and Muslim experiences and take these debates one step further by arguing for the similarities not only in relation to the position of the Muslims in the present and the position of the Jewish people in the past but also in the contemporary world. In doing so I will also argue against the perspective that dichotomizes prejudice directed against Jews and Muslims and attempts to qualify discrimination in a competitive way. What I seek instead is a focus on the common roots of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish prejudice, even if its rhetorical expressions ostensibly involve only one target of stigmatization or, moreover, construct one community in opposition to the other, as it occurs, in some of the anti-Muslim rhetoric of the Hindu and European right.

Throughout the main ethnographic chapters of the book I will rely on material collected during years of fieldwork conducted in India, which involved numerous conversations and observation. Using these "conventional" anthropological methods will allow me to examine the processual nature of day-to-day

constructions of difference highlighting how attitudes and perceptions can radically change from one spacial-temporal context to another under the influence of local, national, and global factors. In doing so I will be looking at a wide range of actants and positions, considering, for example, how issues in synagogue security in India echo both global security **(p.14)** concerns intertwined with the rhetoric of the "war on terror" *and* minoritization processes pertaining to Muslims that go back to colonial practices, or how individual Jews and Muslims have to navigate their relationships with each other through conflicting discourses that both conflate their communities and imagine them as different.

The latter issue will constitute another feature that takes this intervention into the study of Jewish-Muslim imageries in a congruent but somewhat different direction from those discussed earlier, as I will be considering the relationship between the "Jewish Question" and the "Muslim Question" in conjunction with the problematics of Jewish-Muslim relations and cultural and ideological constructs associated with them. Most of the theoretical contributions presented earlier had fruitfully discussed the way Jewish and Muslim imageries are conflated, and in this book I will use these contributions as an important thematic departure point. However, in addition, I will also thrust into the analytical fore those discourses current in South Asia that construct Jews and Muslims in opposition to each other, a topic which had already been raised in Guttman's (2013) analysis, and will consider these issues both in the context of global discourses of Jewishness and Muslimness and against the backdrop of what could be broadly described as Jewish-Muslims relations in South Asia and worldwide.

Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and Jewish-Muslim relations

The histories of Indian Jews and Muslims, as well as the relationship patterns that the two communities have developed with their neighbours in South Asia, can be seen as somewhat different from those of Jewish and Muslim diasporas overseas. While in Europe the Jews have had a long and difficult history of being perceived as the **(p.15)** "ultimate other" (Gilman and Katz 1991: 1), in India, as I will discuss in chapter 2, they have always constituted only a tiny, though very diverse, community, one among many other religious groups. Muslims, on the contrary, have for a long time been perceived as a numerically strong and politically visible population in South Asia, but within Europe they became politically significant only in the second half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, I argue that a discussion of Jewish-Muslim interactions in South Asia can illuminate a number of nodal points in Jewish-Muslim collaboration, co-existence, and conflict in the contemporary world and highlight the interaction of complex and conflicting processes which are at work in the production of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim prejudice. What the book will demonstrate is that these

are composite phenomena that are dependent on multiple contexts of local, national, and international significance.

This chapter started with a discussion of two episodes—a fragment from fieldwork and an extract from a novel by Esther David. The first highlights how in the imagination of the Hindu right, Israelis, thematized as Jews, are seen as the enemy of Palestinians, thematized as Muslims, and therefore as the friends of the Indian state, construed as the state of the Hindus, an imagery that in India translated itself into tightened security procedures, which, as I will discuss in chapter 5, are directed against local Muslims and are perceived as such by the latter. We also saw that my Indian Jewish interlocutor was unsure about the implications that these constructed oppositions had for Indian Jews. In the second extract, in the words of Esther David, we saw not just hesitation but a firm rejection of the logic of such juxtaposition. The author of *The Man with Enormous Wings* unequivocally views the persecution of the Muslims that she saw during the Gujarat riots as a threat also to the Jews, because they were another minority community.

(p.16) In this book, I will discuss both the rhetorical images that became ascribed to Jewish-Muslims relations in different public and political discourses in South Asia and examples of actual interactions between Jews and Muslims in India and Pakistan, as well as of their mutual attitudes and perceptions. I suggest that considering Jewish-Muslim relations in conjunction with an analysis of discrete, overlapping, and juxtaposed Jewish and Muslim imageries would provide an important perspective on both issues, because these topics are themselves co-constitutive of one another. Indeed, both archaic and modern mythologies surrounding Jews and Muslims are affecting day-to-day encounters between Jewish and Muslim individuals, groups, and organizations, while the latter are in their turn now becoming a factor generating potent imageries of Jews and Muslims, for instance, when right-wing discourses utilize examples of anti-Jewish attacks in Europe where the perpetrators are Muslim to construct all Muslims as radicalized and inassimilable others.

This book will therefore both engage with and contribute to the voluminous literature on Jewish-Muslim relations that has examined the topic in different temporal and geographic contexts and which, like the work discussed earlier, comes from different disciplines. Illuminating analysis of Jewish-Muslim relations in the Middle East and North Africa is offered in, for instance, Nettler and Taji-Farouki (1998), Parfitt (2000), and Stillman (2003), to name just some of the main contributions. Muslim attitudes towards Jews and Israel in different parts of the world were explored in Ma’oz (2010). Abdelwahhab Meddeb and Benjamin Stora (2013) co-edited the comprehensive *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations, From the Origins to the Present Day*.

At the same time, I will attempt to use examples from South Asia to problematize some of the assumptions about what sets of phenomena are supposed to constitute Jewish-Muslim relations and, **(p.17)** in particular, to contribute to literature that seeks to unsettle those understandings of these relations that see them as "bilateral," or dependent entirely on the actions of Jews and Muslims enacting these relations or actions of agents constructed as their proxy, such as the State of Israel, Muslim majority states, or different groups and organizations identified as Jewish or Muslim. The studies that I therefore found particularly germane for my discussion are those that have demonstrated the importance of taking into consideration the broader sociohistorical context of European colonialism, as well as local experiences of the two groups. Anthropologist Paul Silverstein has argued that in France and North Africa, Muslim populations have demonstrated an ability both to reject and empathize with their Jewish compatriots and that in France the negativity that some local Muslims exhibit towards the Jews can be seen as a response to the state oppression directed at North African immigrants and their children. Silverstein's ethnography has argued that the younger generation of French Muslims draws parallels between such phenomena as the occupation of Iraq and of Palestinian Territories and their own condition of discrimination in France and that their own response to the French state can take on the form of both anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism (2010: 143–144). At the same time, he problematizes conventional accounts of Jewish-Muslim relations in the contemporary world even further by demonstrating that while in some cases the state oppression that North African immigrants and their children encounter in France is responded to in violence directed against the Jews, in other cases Muslim populations in France and North Africa, for instance, Berber activists, identify with persecuted Jews, which reminds us that the mutual animosity of Jews and Muslims as differently positioned subjects is not by any means inevitable (2010: 144).

A call for a local context-based approach to the study of Jewish-Muslim relations has also been made by the historian Maud **(p.18)** Mandel. Focusing on France, her monograph convincingly argues that daily interactions between French Jews and French Muslims are diverse and go far beyond the polarization over the Israel-Palestine issue. Mandel stresses the importance of paying attention to "the way global dynamics, both in the Middle East and in French North Africa, *came together* with national and even local factors to shape Muslim-Jewish relations in postcolonial France" (2014: 3) and demonstrates how the "Jew" and the "Muslim" became political symbols in the country. More specifically, Mandel argues that one of the key factors that determined the development of Jewish-Muslim relations in France was decolonization, which brought to the country significant numbers of both Jewish and Muslim subjects from North Africa, whose differing experiences of French colonialism and its aftermath resulted in vastly divergent integration processes that put Muslim migrants at a disadvantage in comparison with their Jewish counterparts. Similarly, Ethan

Katz concludes in his monograph exploring the histories of Jews and Muslims from North Africa in France that interactions between them “were not a binary but a decidedly triangular affair,” as the state played a key role in defining these interactions from their very inception, and because Jews and Muslims themselves understood and expressed these attitudes and relations through the prism of their relationship with the French (2015: 24–25).

The following chapters engage with this literature by exploring the role that the local context has played and continues to play in Jewish-Muslim encounters in South Asia and demonstrating that what often stands behind the specifics of the two communities’ mutual attitudes is global imageries of Jewishness and Islam mapped onto the sociocultural and political realities of India and Pakistan, which will bring us back to the first theoretical theme of the book. Egorova and Ahmed (2017) suggested in a study of this problematics **(p.19)** in the United Kingdom that wider discourses of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia[10] often play an important role in the development of the relations between Jewish and Muslim groups. The current book will explore this premise in the South Asian context and will attempt to contribute to wider debates about the meanings of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia—two notions which have acquired a wide range of definitions debated both in the public discourse and in academic literature.

A number of scholars have pointed out how Jewish themes and the topic of Jewish-Muslim relations have been indexed widely in negative representations of Islam. Silverstein has argued that European mass media often portrays Muslims as the main victimizers of European Jews and presents the attacks on Jewish persons and property where perpetrators were Muslim as further evidence of Muslim immigrants’ susceptibility to extremist ideologies and failure to integrate (2005: 367).[11] John Bowen observes that the topic of anti-Semitism appeared in the French discussions of Muslim headscarves (2007: 1), and Egorova and Ahmed (2017) have demonstrated how this rhetoric can have a negative effect on some of the initiatives in Jewish-Muslim dialogue in contemporary Britain.

(p.20) At the same time, the trope of “Jews and Muslims as enemies,” which features widely in Western anti-Muslim narratives, has also become part of anti-Jewish propaganda in some Muslim sources. Pnina Werbner has noted that some Muslims attempt to globalize local conditions of discrimination by constructing polarized oppositions between the Muslim *ummah*[12] and the Western world, which is represented as led by a “Jewish-American conspiracy” (2013: 456; Werbner 2004). In the South Asian context, as I will discuss in more detail in chapters 3 and 4, the discourses that construct Jews and Muslims as the enemies of each other and by implication as, respectively, friends and enemies of the Hindus or of the Indian State, have found their way into the political rhetoric both of the Hindu right in India and of some political and lay commentators in Pakistan.

In addition to interrogating the way local contexts shape interactions between South Asian Jews and Muslims, I will attempt to take studies of Jewish-Muslim encounters discussed previously one theoretical step further by drawing attention to the way the very rubric of Jewish-Muslim relations can be seen as an emplotment of the same processes of minoritization emanating from the European discourse that had constructed Jews and Muslims as the other and how their alleged mutual animosity is a trope reflecting Europe's projections of its own prejudices. In doing so I will build upon and contribute to the academic critique of liberalism that has put into analytical relief postcolonial constructions of the non-Western other,[13] paying particular attention to the way processes of colonial and postcolonial othering produce images of racial and religious difference, which in their turn co-constitute and intersect each other.

(p.21) Jews, Muslims, Religion, and Race

In discussing Jewish-Muslim interactions and mutual perceptions, a number of historians and anthropologists have emphasized the role of colonialism in these processes' development. These contributions formed an important part of wider scholarship concerning the role of colonialism in the creation of rigid divisions among the colonized, which were drawn along constructed racial lines. Anidjar (2003) in his discussion of European conflation of the images of Jews and Arabs, draws upon the work of Mahmood Mamdani (2001), who described the regime of colonial divisions in Africa. Mamdani shows how the colonial state and legislation first produced political divisions between populations and then naturalized them as ethnic (Mamdani 2001: 26–27, Anidjar 2003: xiv) and explains that some racialized minorities were lifted above the majority population of the colonized and were made part of the colonial rule, such as had happened to the Tutsi of Rwanda and Burundi, who, under the pretext of the so-called Hamitic hypothesis, were offered separate education and became to be seen as a political minority that did not belong to the indigenous community (Mamdani 2001: 90, Anidjar 2003: xv).

Turning to the question of Jewish-Muslim relations, Anidjar draws parallels between the position of the Tutsi and that of the Jews of Algeria, who were singled out by the French authorities in a way that gave rise to polarization of Jewish and Arab identities and produced the kind of political difference where each individual had to belong to one naturalized group or another and could not be part of both (2003: xv).

I suggest that the context of South Asia provides an interesting perspective on those narratives about Jewish-Muslim relations and notions of Jewishness and Islam that pertain to representations of the two communities' alleged racial difference. This book will discuss **(p.22)** how colonial discourses that constructed rigid boundaries between communities along perceived racial and religious lines and portrayed Indian Muslims as a group that both formerly belonged to the perceived Hindu majority and asserted their foreignness are

now finding reflection in the discourses of the Hindu right that not only thematize Muslims as former Hindus but aim to re-convert them to Hinduism. I will also consider how in contemporary India the “indigenous” Jewish communities are seen as simultaneously similar to their neighbours due to their language and different from them due to their Jewish heritage. The latter is racialized by the Hindu right on the basis of the perception that Jews allegedly form one universal community and is valorized on the strength of the speculation that Jews are supposed to be in opposition to Muslims.

In this respect, the following chapters will also contribute to the growing anthropological and sociological literature that has explored the way race and religion overlap and co-constitute each other, a significant proportion of which engaged with Jewish and Muslim histories. As I have already briefly noted, a number of important contributions considering the relationship between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism have been made in the context of academic discussion of European racism. Nasar Meer, building on James Thomas (2010) and George Fredrickson (2002), reminds us that the othering of Jews and Muslims is paradigmatic of European racialization and that discourses of modern racism predate ideologies arising out of nineteenth-century scientific thought (Meer 2013a: 388–389). Turning to the more recent history, several scholars have explored how in contemporary Western discourse Muslims have become increasingly racialized and how Islamophobia can be read as an articulation of racism (Modood 2005, Meer and Noorani 2008, Taras 2013, Soyer 2013).

Some academic commentators have explored the way discourses of racialization intersect with constructions of religion in examining **(p.23)** different examples of relations between Muslims, Jews, and other groups. For instance, Esra Özyürek (2015) discusses in her ethnography of German converts to Islam how white Muslims try to negotiate their relationship both with other white Germans and with their co-religionists from other parts of the world. Özyürek shows how, on the one hand, they try to divorce Islam from racialist discourses that portray it as a religion of the “East,” but on the other hand, in doing so, they contribute to further racialization of Muslim immigrants in German society.[14]

A vivid example of the categories of race and religion co-producing each other specifically in the context of intertwined Jewish-Muslim histories comes from Kimberly Arkin’s (2009, 2014) ethnography of French Jewry. Writing about North African Jews in France, Arkin has argued that to be accepted as “properly” Jewish and avoid being conflated with Muslim Arabs, who in the French public discourse are associated with poverty and religious radicalism, they feel the need to follow specific consumption patterns and make expensive fashion choices. Young Sephardi Jews from North Africa thus have to make an extra cultural effort to avoid being racialized as Arab, as this could lead to being seen as Muslim and being subjected to Islamophobic discrimination. This book will

suggest that the Indian context **(p.24)** elucidates the problematics of the race and religion nexus and the dynamics of Jewish-Muslim identity amalgamation in the face of discrimination produced by minoritization. For instance, chapter 3 will discuss how in the times of communal riots local Jews can be confused with Muslims due to their embodied appearance and sartorial practices and have to alter the way they look depending on which groups of rioters they are confronted with.

Finally, I will consider how the topic of Jewish-Muslim relations in India highlights issues in racialization of Jewishness and will engage with literature that discusses the construed racial division among Jewish communities themselves. The following chapters discuss how discourses of racialization that go back to colonial times have played out in the history of Indian Jewish communities, causing both inter- and intragroup divides along perceived racial lines. Thus chapter 2 will consider the way the Baghdadi and the Bene Israel Jewish congregations saw themselves and each other differently in relation to the European strata of the colonial society and were seen as such by the latter. Chapter 5 will explore how these discourses came to play out in the twenty-first century in a very different context of security concerns associated with the perceived (and real) threat of terrorism. I will examine how some of my Bene Israel respondents stressed that the attack on the Nariman House, which was part of the Mumbai attacks, was mainly directed at “Western Jews from Israel,” and not against Indian Jews, and that it was unfortunate that the security measures that had to be increased were now affecting their relations with local Muslims. At the same time, I will discuss how the trope of Muslims as terrorists and the enemies of the Jewish people has also become indexed in some parts of Indian Jewish discourse as a route to seek recognition of Israeli authorities and to assert the position of local Jewish groups as “legitimate” among their co-religionists abroad.

(p.25) Chapters, Methods, and Doing Anthropology Out of the Corner of One’s Eye

It is important to point out at this stage not just what this book is about but also what it will not cover. It will probably fail to satisfy those who are looking for a comprehensive source book for the study of Jewish-Muslim relations in South Asia, as indeed a lot more could be written about specific examples of Jewish-Muslim collaboration and other types of interactions in the subcontinent. Here I mention a few—such as, for instance, the example of Annie Samson, who was the Jewish principal of the first Muslim school for girls in Bombay, or of a Muslim caretaker looking after a synagogue, or of Muslims and Jews cooperating around burials, a tradition that distinguishes them from the Hindu majority. However, many more instances were left behind, and I would not claim that the examples that I have chosen are fully representative of the whole spectrum of Jewish-Muslim encounters in India and Pakistan (and we are not even venturing into other parts of the subcontinent). What the book aimed to do instead is to capture

how the South Asian contextual perspective can cast light on some of the globalized issues in the study of Jewish-Muslims relations and constructions of Jewish and Muslim imageries.

A few notes on the methodology and underlying definitional premises of this study are in order. Exploring the relations between any two groups ethnographically is not always a straightforward task, particularly when these relations have acquired an image of a global problem and when the communities themselves are exceptionally diverse and are particularly well suited to challenge popular assumptions about group boundaries, both in South Asia and worldwide.

In using the term “community” I follow Veena Das, who conceptualizes it not as “something already given or primordial” but rather as an entity which is “constituted through agreements and hence **(p.26)** can also be torn apart by the refusal to acknowledge some part of the community” (2007: 9). Looking at the issue of Jewish and Muslim diversity globally, one quickly discovers that the question of community affiliations becomes ten-fold more complicated. As Gilman points out, the creation of the Jewish State has led to numerous classifications in Israeli society—from European/Ashkenazi to Arab/Mizrahi Jews, from the ultra-Orthodox to radically secular. Similarly, states founded on the Shariah law make clear distinction between modes of religious belief that universally would be called Muslim (2014: xi). Moreover, as Gilman argues, “after 9/11 the very image of the Muslim and of Islam is also fractured: not only do the older fissures of theological differences within Islam, such as Shia, Sunni, Alawaite, Druse, etc., take on new meaning, but they also are read along newer national and political lines, as well as along reformist and neo-conservative ones” (2014: ix).

I will avoid making generalized pronouncements about the overall “state” of Jewish-Muslim relations in South Asia and throughout the book will seek to ensure that both the presented material and my analysis attend to the cultural, religious, and sociopolitical complexities of the two groups, though I realize that the diversity of the subcontinent’s Jews and Muslims is so rich that one can do it justice only to a very limited degree.

At the same time, building upon the argument put forward by Modood (2003) and Meer (2010) in relation to descriptions of British Muslims, I will posit that the diversity of interactions between different community members in different contexts does not suggest that Jewish-Muslim relations cannot be conceptualized in any abstract terms at all. Rather, using Iris Young’s insight about “retain[ing] a description of social group differentiation … without fixing or reifying groups” (2000: 89), I propose that the multiple and differing types of interactions between Jews and Muslims in India and Pakistan could be theorized as various expressions of **(p.27)** Jewish-Muslim relations without reifying any

aspect of these relations or using them as a category of analysis. I also draw inspiration from anthropological studies which demonstrate how actors of different cultural and religious backgrounds establish “communities across communities” that do not always map onto popular perceptions of group boundaries (e.g., Baumann 1996, Sanjek 2000, Mandel 2008).

For the purposes of protecting the identity of my respondents I tried to anonymize their contributions not only by changing their names but oftentimes by removing geographical identifiers wherever possible. Given the sensitive nature of the topics that were discussed, I also found it helpful to recur wherever possible to published materials that are available in the public domain. However, a bigger ethical challenge associated with writing about a topic that has attracted a lot of negative public attention and acquired a mythological life of its own is to avoid inadvertently providing ammunition to be used in accounts that construe Jewish-Muslim relations as negative. As the book will show, both perceived groups (broadly described) demonstrate a wide range of views on the topic of Jews and Muslims, from moderate to radical, and I will endeavour to give all views full analytic attention.

Finally, the nature of the topic required taking extra care in selecting material that would provide analytical mileage for its discussion. Indeed, studying Jewish-Muslim encounters, or encounters between any specific groups, does not always provide the anthropologist with a clearly bounded field. Attitudes, perceptions, and ways of treating the other are not something that a group or an individual performs all the time. I therefore had to focus fieldwork around specific nodal points. For instance, I found it useful to visit synagogues, as some of them are located in Muslim neighbourhoods, where one could observe interactions between Jewish and Muslim inhabited spaces. These interactions themselves could be fleeting and fragmented, rather than conducted on a regular basis. And even when one does **(p.28)** come across what appears to be a fine example of Jewish-Muslim interactions, can one ever be sure that it is what it looks like from one particular perspective? Does a Muslim wedding taking place in the courtyard of a synagogue (an episode that is discussed in chapter 4) tell us that local Jewish-Muslim relations are good, or is it just a matter of practicality? And if our local interlocutors theorize it as a matter of practicality and nothing more, can we dismiss the event as irrelevant to our discussion of Jewish-Muslim interactions, if we know that in a different part of the world it would be theorized as relevant (and have some eyebrows raised)?

During fieldwork, I had to rely a lot on “interviews”/conversations, some of which were scheduled and planned in advance and some of which happened spontaneously—at a dinner party on Rosh Hashanah, in a Muslim shop next to a synagogue, in a taxi when looking for a Jewish prayer hall. The fleeting nature of some of these places/encounters probably reflects well the processual and multifaceted nature of what one might try to capture under the rubric of Jewish-

Muslim relations. Indeed, as the ethnographic fragment with which I started this chapter suggests, when asking someone about a topic with a high media profile, it is hard to avoid sending them down the path of commenting on a specific agenda which has a global resonance, whether this resonance is close to their experiences or not.

In trying to answer these questions I rely on John Jackson's (2013) insight regarding the challenges of conducting social research today, in a digital age and globalized world, when everybody is on the move, especially when doing research on groups who are already researching themselves (which is the case with Indian Jewish and Muslim commentators, some of whom have written on the very topic of Jewish-Muslim relations).[15] Jackson suggests that a possible **(p. 29)** anthropological response to these challenges would be using what he describes in a monograph under the same title as "thin description." Jackson posits that *Thin Description* is a response to the overconfidence of the assumption that Geertzian thick description is supposed to give its practitioners superior powers of understanding the studied communities which might even surpass the powers of knowing themselves that the studied people have. Thin description, Jackson writes, produces "a kind of flat ethnography, where you slice into a world from different perspectives, scales, registers, and angles—all distinctively useful, valid, and worthy of consideration. A flat ethnography values such thin-slicing, even if the scope of the questions posed is, in some ways, as massive as ever" (2013: 16–17).

Inspired by Jackson's analysis, I describe the discussion presented in this book as an example of this thin-slicing and fieldwork for this project as doing anthropology out of the corner of one's eye—studying a phenomenon that unravels on the periphery of what the ethnographers see in front of them but that at the same time allows us to explore issues of considerable importance from multiple perspectives, all worthy of attention.

The main ethnographic chapters of the book—3, 4, and 5—can probably be read in any order. Chapter 2 provides an outline of the history of Jews and Muslims in South Asia focusing on the multiplicity of definitions of both groups. While highlighting the diversity of Indian Jews and Indian Muslims, it will discuss how in the British period the colonial authorities constructed and sedimented the boundaries both around and within the two groups, depicting them simultaneously as foreign to the subcontinent in ways that would minoritize them in British India and subsequently, in independent India, and as indigenous, in ways that proved to be detrimental to their position vis-à-vis the Hindu majority in the case of Indian Muslims and vis-à-vis overseas Jewish organizations in the case of Indian Jews. The chapter also shows how beginning from the 1930s **(p.30)** Indian Muslims begin to be directly compared to European Jews in the rhetoric of the nascent Hindu right.

Chapter 3 builds upon and continues Mufti's discussion of the relationship between the Jewish Question in Europe and constructions of Muslim imageries in India by exploring how global Jewish identities and experiences of alterity overlap with the minority question in independent India and how trajectories of anti-Muslim violence intersect in India with Nazi rhetoric that harks back to Hitler's Germany. The chapter also discusses how the experiences of contemporary Indian Jewish communities both mirror and contrast those of Indian Muslims and how Indian Jews and the alleged absence of anti-Semitism in India have become a reference point in the discourse of the Hindu right deployed to mask anti-Muslim and other forms of intolerance. The chapter will continue the discussion about the way Indian minoritization practices are reminiscent of those stemming from Europe, by considering how in the imagination of the Hindu right Jews and Muslims are both confused with and read in opposition to each other. In the end, the chapter will interrogate the way the history of Indian Jews has been used in the Indian political discourse to highlight the alleged absence of intolerance and discrimination of minorities and will reflect on the meanings of Jewishness, of anti-Semitism, and of its perceived absence.

Chapter 4 reflects on the trope of Jewish-Muslim relations by exploring the daily interactions between members of the two communities in India and Pakistan and the mutual attitudes and perceptions that they demonstrate. Though the ethnographic focus of this chapter is on the relationship between the two groups, it will look at the topic through the prism of wider historical and sociopolitical context, which will again feature broader imageries of Jews and Muslims. In the first half of the chapter my focus will be on India, where the relations between local Jews and Muslims allow for an account of diverse instances in both collaboration and tension, and **(p.31)** I will suggest that both groups construct a conceptual boundary between local Jews or local Muslims, and "outsiders." Thus, many of my Jewish interlocutors would thematize those Muslims who live near them as different from those coming from other parts of India who have never had direct interactions with Indian Jews. Similarly, my Muslim interviewees see Western Jews and Jewish Israelis as markedly different from the Bene Israel of the Konkan coast and the Bene Ephraim of Andhra Pradesh. In this respect, my discussion of perceived Jewish and Muslim alterities will be embedded in further analysis of issues in racialization of the two groups that goes back to the colonial discourse.

Our attention will then turn to Pakistan, where the state politics involve a strong anti-Israeli stance, and where local Jewish communities practically ceased to be part of the national religious mosaic. This part will discuss the way Jewishness is constructed in relation to debates about Zionism and will consider how archaic European anti-Jewish stereotypes have found their way into the discourse of Pakistani Muslims who have never had any experience of direct communication with Jewish persons. Finally, the chapter will explore the topic of Jewish-Muslim

relations in respect to the Israel-Palestine conflict and will argue that the way the situation in the Middle East is understood among Jews and Muslims living in the Diaspora is to a large extent mediated by their local experiences.

Chapter 5 will engage with the two main themes of the book by focusing on the way constructions of Jewish-Muslim relations and imageries of Jewish and Muslim communities became affected by the Mumbai attacks and the general post 9/11 rhetoric of the "war on terror." The chapter will show that these events and the securitization discourses that emerged in their aftermath created new challenges for local Jewish and Muslim groups, but it will also complicate accounts that reduce Jewish-Muslim encounters to problems of security. The ethnographic examples presented in this chapter will suggest that concerns about the **(p.32)** perceived Muslim threat that some of my Jewish respondents exhibited in relation to Indian Muslims ultimately had very little to do with Islam and were embedded in the wider problematics of security issues facing Jewish communities around the world, the politics of Jewish identity arbitration in the State of Israel, and even the reality of caste discrimination in India.

The final chapter will revisit the main theoretical premises and conclusions of the book and will reflect on their applicability to contexts that go beyond South Asia, and particularly to Europe. It will also reflect on the work that Jewish-Muslim conceptual entanglements can do when explored at the intersection of Jewish studies and postcolonial theory.

Notes:

(1) The name of the synagogue is fictional.

(2) Here and in most other cases I use fictional names to protect the anonymity of my research participants.

(3) *Aliyah*—Hebrew for "ascent"—the immigration of the Jewish people to the State of Israel.

(4) BJP—Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) is a right-wing party with links to the Hindu nationalist movement.

(5) For the most recent discussion of the position that Jews and Muslims occupied in Western European thought, see Renton (2017).

(6) For a recent discussion of the conceptual and historical relationship between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, see contributions made in Renton and Gidley (2017). For a discussion specifically of the effect of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on the relationship between Jews and Muslims, see Egorova and Ahmed (2017), who focus on the case of the United Kingdom.

(7) Sara Farris suggests that nowadays for the Muslims, like for the Jews in the past, cultural and/or political emancipation is theorized as a reward for those who accept Western values (2014: 296). In making this argument Farris focuses specifically on the French case study and the 2004 law banning religious signifiers in public schools and argues that the official French approach to religion in public sphere, which targets mainly Muslims, features some of the same arguments that were made in the debate on the Jewish Question in nineteenth-century Germany. More specifically, she suggests that the discussion of Muslim integration in France that followed the 2004 law is starkly similar to the position of Bruno Bauer, a Hegelian philosopher who in the 1840s suggested that full juridical equality and emancipation could be granted to the Jews only under the conditions of their assimilation, which required the dismissal of religion (Farris 2014: 298). Farris does not suggest either that the present debate about Muslim integration is derived directly from the past debate on the Jewish Question or that Bauer's arguments have had a direct influence on the champions of the French secularist agenda. Instead, she proposes that what partly underpins the discursive quest for (formerly) Jewish and (presently) Muslim integration into the universalist republican state is "cultural differentialism," which imagines insurmountable differences between cultures (2014: 296–297).

(8) Klug suggests that Judaism and Islam share a similar fate on three main levels. First, both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia can be expressed by attacking respective religions, which have had a history of being vilified in Christian polemics that had constructed a binary opposition between the "forgiving" Christianity and the "vengeful" and "merciless" Judaism and Islam. As Klug insightfully points out, echoes of these binaries are still heard today, for instance, when Jewish and Muslim ritual methods for killing animals for food are singled out as cruel, or when the mass media describes the attacks where the perpetrators are Muslim using narratives full of Islamophobic stereotypes. Second, Klug argues that the negative narrative about Judaism and Islam was adopted by the Enlightenment project, to which this narrative was passed on by the very Christianity that the Enlightenment saw itself as overturning. Judaism and Islam were therefore seen as antithetical to the Enlightenment project, which imagined itself as promoting the values of reason, freedom, and such. Third, drawing on Said (1979), Kalmar and Penslar (2005), and Gilman (2006), Klug observes that both Judaism and Islam were seen as firmly rooted in the traditions of the East (2014: 453).

(9) See also Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi's (2012) ethnography of the Gujarat riots theorized as a pogrom.

(10) In using the terms "anti-Semitism" and "Islamophobia" I draw on Brian Klug's (2014) discussion of these terms offered in his paper examining the analogy between the two phenomena. Klug acknowledges that the usage of both

terms has been critiqued due to their possible inaccuracy. The word “anti-Semitism” could be read as designating both anti-Arab, as well as anti-Jewish, sentiments, as both Jews and Arabs could be described as “Semites” and should therefore, some argue, be replaced with “anti-Jewish racism” and “Judaeophobia.” Similarly, the term “Islamophobia,” according to some commentators, should be replaced with such terms as “anti-Muslim racism,” “anti-Muslimism,” or “Muslimophobia” (Klug 2014: 448–449). At the same time, Klug suggests that now that both terms, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, are “out of the box,” debates over the accuracy of the terms should not obscure the concepts that they designate. Klug therefore continues to use them, and I follow his approach.

(11) For further discussion of this trope in the discourse of European right-wing parties, see also Hafez (2014).

(12) Ummah (Arabic for “community” or “people”)—designates the concept of the Muslim community all over the world.

(13) Seminal contributions to this critique have been made by Saba Mahmood (2006, 2016) and Joseph Massad (2015), and I will return to this problematic in chapter 4.

(14) In the context of anthropology of Judaism and Jewishness Henry Goldschmidt (2006) has discussed in his monograph examining the relationship between the black and the Hassidic identities in the Crown Heights neighbourhood of Brooklyn that race and religion can be tied to each other in ways that co-produce them. He argues that for many African American Crown Heights residents race functions as a metalanguage for religion, for instance, when the sartorial practices of Hasidic men are interpreted as signs of racial whiteness and the Lubavitch community’s insulation is seen as a form of racial segregation, or when the Hasidim define their African American neighbors as Gentiles (2006: 29). Writing about black Jewish identities, Noah Tamarkin has argued in his discussion of the DNA research on the Lemba of South Africa that this newly embraced scientific naturalization of Jewishness obscured the ways in which tested communities experienced and understood their racial and religious identities (Tamarkin 2011).

(15) See, for instance, Fatah (2010), Reuben (2010).